

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, October 1881, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Hotel Continental, Paris.
Sunday, Oct. 23rd or 24th, 1881. My darling May:

I am in a veritable wonderland of Electricity and if you want to keep me in Europe you better come here and look after me. Already I begin to long for the Volts Laboratory to test ideas that come thick and fast upon me. The Electrical Exhibition is a vast success and I should like you to see it. There is so much that you would enjoy. If you say yes — telegraph me and I will secure apartments — and come to London for you. If you don't care to come my plans are as follows:

I will stay here until I have made a careful study of the whole exhibition — taking a number of exhibits every day — and noting down with Johnson's assistance the chief points. This plan would keep me here not less than one week. I have been busy yesterday and today preparing with Mr. Antoine Breguet a description of the experiments made in New York at Dr. Hamilton's house with the Induction Balance for presentation tomorrow afternoon at the French Academy.

It was a great surprise to me and a great delight to find good Papa and Mamma waiting for me at Charing Cross with good news of the high award bestowed upon me by the Administration of the Exhibition. I was also much gratified by the way the audience in Paris received my name when it was announced that a “ Diplome d' honneur” had been granted to me. It was especially gratifying as the audience had no idea I was present. As each name was mentioned the friends and admirers of each man applauded — and it was curious to note the differences in popularity indicated by the varying amount of applause. When my name was announced there was a perfect storm of applause and many persons cheered. No such manifestation was granted to any other person. Mr.

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Mascart made a long description of the History of Electricity — 2 describing the various systems of telegraphy that arose — and the developments of telephony — and I am told that the only person named in the whole discourse was myself. I don't know how that may be but certainly sine was the only name I heard. I listened for it — and soon it came Monsieur “ ” Bell.

Altogether I feel that although my exhibit did not amount to very much — I was the person most honoured among all the exhibitors there.

Nearly every evening this week I am engaged for dinner. Wednesday evening — I am to visit — N. Gaston Plants, the originator of the method of storing electricity in what is called a “ Secondary battery ” — bottling it up in fact so as to be ready for use at any moment. Thursday evening Antoine Breguet gives me a scientific dinner. Friday evening I dine with the Minister des Postes et due Telegraphs.

I cannot remember the names of all the distinguished men I have met since coming here. I only know that my visit (short as it has been so far) has been so crowded with distinguished faces, new ideas, and novel scenes that the last few days appear to have been drawn out into months. I suppose we really measure time by the number of ideas passing through the mind and this accounts for the stupendous length of the last two days. On going through the exhibition last night my attention was suddenly arrested by a little (part of letter missing)